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ARISTOTLE'S POETICS AND CERTAIN AMERICAN LITERARY CRITICS

I. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Aristotle's Poetics has profoundly influenced the literature of England¹. The American writers of the nineteenth century, in spite of their frequent protestations to the contrary, were deeply influenced by English literary criticism as well as by English literature. At the same time they did not hesitate to go beyond their English models to the sources from which came so much of the knowledge at the disposal of English authors and critics. It is, however, in most instances well-nigh impossible to determine whether an American writer or critic is indebted directly to some classical authority, or is indebted rather to some English intermediary. Without attempting to decide this matter, except in cases where there is special evidence, I shall in the following pages try to set forth the Aristotelian doctrines pertaining to literature which occur in the critical works of Poe, Lowell, and Stedman. These three critics are selected because during the last three quarters of the nineteenth century, a period approximately corresponding to the Victorian Era in England, they were the literary arbiters in America.

One must recognize at the start that all three were probably better versed in Latin than in Greek. They almost certainly were more at home with the *Ars Poetica* of Horace than with the Poetics of Aristotle². Since Horace and Aristotle agree on so many critical matters, it is obviously useless, except in cases where there is a specific reference or a specific quotation, to attempt to assign one or the other of these critics of classical times as the source of a thought or an observation in one or another of the three American critics.

II. EDGAR ALLAN POE AND ARISTOTLE'S POETICS

Edgar Allan Poe was not a good Greek scholar, but he was passably versed in Latin and in French³. He could hardly have read the Greek of the Poetics, which is by no means simple. There were, however, already in his day numerous translations of the Poetics into Latin, French, or English, and, although none of these

was published in America, one or more might have come into his hands⁴. Poe does, indeed, in a number of places mention Aristotle with an air of familiarity with his works; but Poe was not free from the assumption of knowledge which he did not possess. The likelihood of his having read the Poetics is further lessened by his failure to understand correctly certain rather obvious remarks of Aristotle, especially since his mistakes are at times identical with those made by modern critics whom he had read and admired. For his second-hand knowledge of the Poetics there are three likely sources: English periodicals such as Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine and The London Quarterly Review⁵, scattered references in English and in French literature to the Poetics, and, more particularly, the critical works of Augustus William Schlegel^{6a} and Samuel Taylor Coleridge^{6b}.

Scattered throughout Poe's critical essays, and occasionally in his tales also, are discussions of a number of matters which have the true Aristotelian flavor. First, there appears the question of creative, artistic imitation. Secondly, various questions connected with plot are considered: dramatic unity (or the unities), the proper magnitude of the plot, selection and organization of material, and portrayal of inconsistencies. Thirdly, poetry is contrasted with philosophy. Fourthly, Poe defines the object of poetry. Finally, he discusses the artistic merits of art and nature.

Poe's discussions of these topics will now be considered in detail, and will be compared with the corresponding discussions in the Poetics.

Poe has apparently grasped something of the Aristotelian conception of art as imitation (*μίμησις*)⁸. He

¹See Lane Cooper and Alfred Gudeman, *A Bibliography of the Poetics of Aristotle* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1928; now published by the Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York). Several translations of the Poetics into Latin, French, or English were made prior to 1820.

²See Margaret Alterton, *Origins of Poe's Critical Theory*, 7-45 (this monograph was published by the State University of Iowa. The work bears no date, but it appeared about 1925).

^{3a}See note 28, below.

^{3b}See notes 33, 34, below.

⁴The text of the Poetics I used is that by J. Vahlen⁵ (Leipzig, Teubner, 1885), as printed and translated in a volume of The Loeb Classical Library, entitled *Aristotle, The Poetics*, "Longinus" on the Sublime, Demetrius on Style (London, Heinemann, New York, Putnam's, 1927). The translation of Aristotle's Poetics in this volume is by W. Hamilton Fyfe (see below, in this note).

For *μίμησις* see the Poetics 1.2 'Ἐποικοῖα . . . σύνολον . . . This passage is translated by Professors Cooper and Bywater (see below, in this note) as follows: " . . . Epic Poetry and Tragedy, as well as Comedy and Dithyrambic Poetry, and for the most part the music of the flute and lyre, in their general nature are forms of imitation; that is, they represent, or imitate, something through an arrangement of words or notes . . . "; "Epic poetry and Tragedy, as also Comedy, Dithyrambic poetry, and most flute-playing, and lyre-playing, are all, viewed as a whole, modes of imitation . . ."

⁵In his notes Professor Pritchard had quoted often, in full, Aristotle's exact words. Now this procedure was right; the reader of this paper ought to have Aristotle's words before him. Everybody, however, knows that the Greek of the Poetics is not easy Greek. On careful reflection, I felt obliged to omit most of the Greek. Yet, by giving the first and the last words of a passage, I indicate briefly what passage of Aristotle Professor Pritchard had in mind. It then seemed desirable to give a translation of Aristotle's words. Now, as Professor Pritchard wrote to me, a literal trans-

¹See Marvin Theodore Herrick, *The Poetics of Aristotle in England* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1930; now published by the Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York). <For a review, by Professor Pritchard, of this monograph see THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 27.61-62. C. K.>

²See my articles, Lowell's Debt to Horace's *Ars Poetica*, *American Literature* 3 (1931), 259-276; Horace and Edgar Allan Poe, *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 26 (1933), 129-133; Stedman and Horatian Criticism, *American Literature* 5 (1933), 166-169.

³George Edward Woodberry, *Edgar Allan Poe*, 1.131, says of Poe, " . . . He was a fair Latinist for his years, read French, and had the merest smattering of Greek, Spanish, and Italian. . . ." (Woodberry's work on Poe was published, in two volumes, at Cambridge, by Houghton Mifflin Company, in 1909).

writes⁷:

...Coming to the drama, we shall see that in its mechanisms we have made progress, while in its spirituality we have done little or nothing for centuries certainly, and, perhaps, little or nothing for thousands of years. And this is because what we term the spirituality of the drama is precisely its imitative portion—is exactly that portion which distinguishes it as one of the principal of the imitative arts....

In the same essay, Poe writes⁸, "...Just as an art is imitative, is it stationary. The most imitative arts are the most prone to repose..." The passages just quoted have an important bearing upon the relations of Poe and Aristotle. It might be argued from Poe's cavalier treatment of Aristotle elsewhere, and from his supercilious attitude toward Greek drama, which he considered hopelessly out of date, that he would relegate Aristotle to the scrap-heap as a critic. Poe has, in fact, little or no reverence for preceding critics, nor can one hope to find him always consistent in his arguments. It would, however, be too glaring an inconsistency even for Poe that he should at one time declare that there has been possibly no advance in the imitative portion of the drama for thousands of years, and then that he should at another time refuse to give any credit as critic to Aristotle, who faithfully recorded the imitative nature of the ancient drama. If no advance has been made in the imitative portion of the drama, the old dramatic laws are still binding in so far as they deal with the stationary, or imitative, parts of the drama. But Poe goes on in a quite Aristotelian vein to support his belief in the immutability of poetic principles⁹:

...In regard to the leading principles of true poesy, these, we think, stand not at all in need of the elucidation hourly wasted upon them. Founded in the

lation of the Poetics would, on account of the nature of the work, be almost unintelligible. In a number of instances Professor Pritchard had quoted (in his text) from the "expanded translation" of the Poetics made by Professor Lane Cooper, of Cornell University (see below, in this note). If a literal translation of the Poetics would be almost unintelligible, an expanded version like that of Professor Cooper has its disadvantages. One asks, What part of this version is Aristotle, what part is Professor Cooper? The careful student prefers Aristotle *in propria persona* to Aristotle plus even so good an interpreter as Professor Cooper. I may refer here to some similar remarks made by Professor La Rue Van Hook, in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 26.68 A, at the top, in the course of his review of Professor Cooper's "expanded translation" of Aristotle, Rhetoric.

I have therefore decided to append to the Greek quoted by Professor Pritchard the versions of the passages in question that are to be found in the following volumes: Lane Cooper, Aristotle on the Art of Poetry: An Amplified Version, with Supplementary Illustrations for Students of English (this work was published originally in 1913 by Messrs. Ginn and Company, New York. For a review of this book, by Professor James R. Wheeler, see THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 7.40); Ingram Bywater, Aristotle on the Art of Poetry: A Revised Text, with Critical Introduction, Translation, and Commentary (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1909).

Two other translations of the Poetics are readily available, in the following works: S. H. Butcher, The Poetics of Aristotle, Translated with a Critical Text (London, Macmillan, 1895), and the volume Aristotle, The Poetics...., mentioned above in the first paragraph of this note as containing the translation of the Poetics by W. Hamilton Pye. Butcher's translation is a close second to that by Bywater; Pye's version contains many errors.

I give the translations in the following order: Cooper, Bywater. In some places Professor Pritchard in his text gives Aristotle in Professor Cooper's version; in such cases the note shows only Bywater's rendering. C. K. >

⁷References in this paper to Poe's writings are made according to the work entitled The Works of Edgar Allan Poe (New York, W. J. Widdleton, 1867, 4 volumes). Titles like "Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Willis, and the Drama" name pieces written by Poe. References like "3.335" are to volume and page of Widdleton's work.—For the quotation in the text following the mark for note 7 see Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Willis, and the Drama, 3.335.

⁸Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Willis, and the Drama, 3.334.

⁹Rufus Dawes, 3.147.

unerring instincts of our nature, they are enduring and immutable....

The two instincts which, according to Aristotle, are the source of artistic imitation are, first, the habit of imitation, and, secondly, the natural pleasure taken in the products of imitation¹⁰. Furthermore, this imitative activity of the artist is no merely slavish copying; it is also creative. In Poe's words¹¹,

... we find that, in respect to compositions which have been really received as poems, the *imaginative*, or, more popularly, the creative portions *alone* have ensured them to be so received....

Of two contemporary authors, Poe writes¹²:

...He <Mr. Street> appears, however, not at any time to have been aware that mere description is not poetry at all. We demand creation—*poiesis*....

...The American <J. Rodman Drake> has brought to his task a mere *fancy*, and has grossly failed in doing what many suppose him to have done. There is not one particle of the true *poiesis* about The Culprit Fay....

Poe apparently had a vague notion of the Aristotelian doctrine that art can improve on nature. Aristotle mentions this belief in connection with the objects of artistic imitation. Those objects, he said, are men doing things. Such men, he adds, can be represented as they are, as worse than they are, or as better than they are¹³. Poe applied the principle to what Aristotle would consider the useful art, rather than the fine art, of landscape gardening¹⁴. He mentions

...the fact (which none but the ignorant dispute) that no such combination of scenery exists in nature as the painter of genius may produce. No such paradises are to be found in reality as have glowed on the canvass of Claude. In the most enchanting of natural landscapes, there will always be found a defect or an excess—many excesses and defects. While the component parts may defy, individually, the highest skill of the artist, the arrangement of these parts will always be susceptible of improvement.... The original beauty is never so great as that which may be introduced....

Aristotle and Poe are alike interested to determine the proper size of an artistic literary work. Aristotle believes that, to be beautiful, a tragedy must be of such

¹⁰Poetics 4.1-2 'Εἰκοσι... πᾶντας.... "As to its general origin, we may say that Poetry has sprung from two causes, each of them a thing inherent in human nature. The first is the habit of imitation; for to imitate is instinctive with mankind; and man is superior to the other animals, for one thing, in that he is the most imitative of creatures, and learns at first by imitation. Secondly, all men take a natural pleasure in the products of imitation...." "It is clear that the general origin of poetry was due to two causes, each of them part of human nature. Imitation is natural to man from childhood, one of his advantages over the lower animals being this, that he is the most imitative creature in the world, and learns at first by imitation. And it is also natural for all to delight in works of imitation...."

¹¹Longfellow's Ballads, 3.365-366.

¹²Marginalia cxiv, 3.540; Fancy and Imagination, 3.376.

¹³Poetics 2.1 'Εἰ... καὶ τοιοῦτους.... "The primary objects of artistic imitation are human beings in action, men performing or undergoing something.... And the agents must be either of a higher or a lower type; for virtually all the distinctions in human character are derived from the primary distinction between goodness and badness which divides the human race. It follows that, in the imitation, the agents must be represented as better than we ourselves, or worse, or some such men as we...." "The objects the imitator represents are actions, with agents who are necessarily either good men or bad—the diversities of human character being nearly always derivative from this primary distinction, since the line between virtue and vice is one dividing the whole of mankind. It follows therefore, that the agents represented must be either above our own level of goodness, or beneath it, or just such as we are...."

¹⁴The Domain of Arnheim, 1.302-303, 305.

a size only that all the parts may easily be embraced in the memory¹⁵. To this Poe agrees¹⁶:

...In poems of magnitude the mind of the reader is not, at all times, enabled to include, in one comprehensive survey, the proportions and proper adjustments of the whole....

Aristotle, however, believes that, so long as the story is perspicuous throughout, the longer it is the better¹⁷. Although, in making this statement, he has a tragedy primarily in mind, it seems probable that he means the statement to have a wider application. It is noteworthy that, whereas Aristotle refrains from defining exactly the proper size of a work, Poe ventures, in a statement diametrically opposite to that of Aristotle, to insist that a work of art (in this case a short story) is better, within artistic limits, in proportion to its brevity. But it does not seem likely that Poe is thinking, any more than Aristotle was thinking, only of the short story or poem when he writes as follows¹⁸:

...Were I bidden to say how the highest genius could be most advantageously employed for the best display of its own powers, I should answer, without hesitation—in the composition of a rhymed poem, not to exceed in length what might be perused in an hour. Within this limit alone can the highest order of true poetry exist. I need only here say, upon this topic, that, in almost all classes of composition, the unity of effect or impression is a point of the greatest importance. It is clear, moreover, that this unity cannot be thoroughly preserved in productions whose perusal cannot be completed at one sitting....

In Poe's discussion of plot there is a peculiar mixture of agreement with the dicta of Aristotle and of dissent therefrom. For Aristotle the plot is the very soul of tragedy¹⁹. Poe, when he is criticizing a novel, yet is speaking generally, expressly denies to this principle any validity²⁰:

...The absence of plot can never be critically regarded as a defect; although its judicious use, in all cases aiding and in no case injuring other effects, must be regarded as of a very high order of merit.

In his discussion of the drama and of poetic composition, Poe repeats more fully these sentiments²¹:

The pleasure derived from the contemplation of the unity resulting from plot is far more intense than is ordinarily supposed, and, as in nature we meet with no such combination of incident, appertains to a very lofty region of the ideal. In speaking thus we have not said that plot is more than an adjunct to the drama—

¹⁵Poetics 7.10... ὥστε δεῖ... ἐμνημόνευτον εἶναι, "...In the same way, then, as an inanimate object made up of parts, or a living creature, must be of such a size that the parts and the whole may be easily taken in by the eye, just so must the plot of a tragedy have a proper length, so that the parts and the whole may be easily embraced by the memory..."; "...Just in the same way, then, as a beautiful whole made up of parts, or a beautiful living creature, must be of some size, so a story or Plot must be of some length, but of a length to be taken in by the memory...."

¹⁶Longfellow's Ballads, 3.369.

¹⁷Poetics 7.12 ὁ δὲ κατ' αὐτὴν τὴν φύσιν... μέγιστος.... "The artistic limit, set by the nature of the thing itself, is this: So long as the plot is perspicuous throughout, the more beautiful will it be on account of its magnitude...."; "...The limit, however, set by the actual nature of the thing is this: the longer the story, consistently with its being comprehensible as a whole, the finer it is by reason of its magnitude...."

¹⁸Nathaniel Hawthorne, 3.196.

¹⁹Poetics 6.19 Ἀρχὴ... τραγῳδίας.... "The Plot, then, is the First Principle, and as it were the very Soul of Tragedy"; "...We maintain, therefore, that the first essential, the life and soul, so to speak, of Tragedy is the Plot...."

²⁰J. Fenimore Cooper, 3.392.

²¹Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Willis, and the Drama, 3.344.

more than a perfectly distinct and separable source of pleasure. It is *not* an essential.... Good dramas have been written with very little plot; capital dramas might be written with none at all. Some plays of high merit, having plot, abound in irrelevant incident, in incident, we mean, which could be displaced or removed altogether without effect upon the plot itself, and yet are by no means objectionable as dramas; and for this reason, that the incidents are evidently irrelevant, *obviously* episodic....

The difference between these two critics in point of view about plot is the result chiefly of their different ways of looking upon the function of art. Poe says that a poem has pleasure as its immediate object. To this Aristotle would, doubtless, agree. Aristotle, however, evidently believes that for each art there is a specific pleasure which it is the function of that art to produce²². Poe expresses no such carefully analyzed criticism of the arts, and apparently did not realize that such a differentiation of purpose could be made.

Upon other matters in his discussions of plot Poe shows the same vagueness of knowledge of Aristotle's theories. In most cases, too, he shows a lack of complete understanding of them. With Aristotle he believes that every plot should be worked out to its dénouement before anything shall be attempted with the pen²³:

...It is only with the dénouement constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention.

Poe also accepted Aristotle's statement that a play should have a certain kind of beginning, one that does not require a preface. He regards as objectionable the notes that Longfellow found it necessary to prefix to his *Skeleton in Armor* and to his *Spanish Student*²⁴. As he declares in another place²⁵, "...Every work of art should contain within itself all that is required for its own comprehension..." The outlining of the plot will increase the likelihood that all that is written will be necessary to the play, and not superfluous. He writes²⁶:

...In dramatic writing, no principle is more clear than that nothing should be said or done which has not a tendency to develop the catastrophe, or the characters....

As the last quotation shows, Poe, like Aristotle, believes the involved plot superior to the uninvolved,

²²See Lane Cooper, *Aristotle on the Art of Poetry*, 18 (see note 6, above): "...he <Aristotle> implies that other forms of art—we might instance comedy—have as their special end or pleasure the relief of others of the general class of disturbing emotions to which pity and fear belong."

²³Poetics 17.5 Τὸς τε λόγους... παρατείνειν.... "As for the story, whether it be traditional or his own invention, the poet should first make a general brief or outline of the whole, and then extend this by the insertion of episodes...."; "...His story, again, whether already made or of his own making, he should first simply and reduce to a universal form, before proceeding to lengthen it out by the insertion of episodes...."; *The Philosophy of Composition*, 2.259.

²⁴Poetics 7.4... ἀρχὴ... γίνεσθαι.... "A Beginning (= X) is that which does not itself come after anything else in a necessary sequence, but after which some other thing (= Y) does naturally exist or come to pass"; "...A beginning is that which is not itself necessarily after anything else, and which has naturally something else after it...."; Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Willis, and the Drama, 3.352; Longfellow's Ballads, 3.369.

²⁵Elizabeth Oakes Smith, 3.133.

²⁶Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Willis, and the Drama, 3.355.

and insists upon a necessary or probable sequence of events²⁷:

... A mere succession of events, even the most spirited, will no more constitute a plot than a multiplication of zeros, even the most infinite, will result in the production of a unit. ... The common notion seems to be in favor of mere complexity; but a plot, properly understood, is perfect only inasmuch as we shall find ourselves unable to detach from it *or disarrange* any single incident involved, without *destruction* to the mass. This we say is the point of perfection—a point never yet attained, but not on that account unattainable. Practically, we may consider a plot as of high excellence, when no one of its component parts shall be susceptible of *removal* without *detriment* to the whole. Here, indeed, is a vast lowering of the demand, and with less than this no writer of refined taste should content himself.

Poe shared with others the mistaken notion that Aristotle taught the three dramatic unities of time, place, and action or plot. This notion he indubitably found in Schlegel's criticism²⁸. In Poe's startlingly accurate study of Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge* there occur the following words²⁹:

... The effect of the present narrative might have been materially increased by confining the action within the limits of London. The *Notre Dame* of Hugo affords a fine example of the force which can be gained by concentration, or unity of place. The unity of time is also sadly neglected, to no purpose, in *Barnaby Rudge*....

Poe agrees with Aristotle that inconsistencies in the characters portrayed are permissible. Aristotle stipulates only that the characters be consistently inconsistent, that is, that the inconsistency in them shall be in harmony with the nature of the characters portrayed³⁰. Poe's statement is substantially the same³¹:

... Although the representation of no human character should be quarrelled with for its inconsistency, we yet

²⁷Poetics 9.11c *ἐπεὶ δὲ οὐ μόνον... δι' ἄλλα...* "... Tragedy is an imitation not only of a complete action, but of incidents that arouse pity and fear; and such incidents affect us most powerfully when we are not expecting them, if at the same time they are caused by one another. ..."; "Tragedy, however, is an imitation not only of a complete action, but also of incidents arousing pity and fear. Such incidents have the very greatest effect on the mind when they occur unexpectedly and at the same time in consequence of one another. ..."; Poetics 13.2... *δεῖ... περὶ τὴν μὲν...* "... In the most perfect tragedy, as we have seen... the synthesis of the incidents must be, not uninvolved, but involved. ..."; "We assume that, for the finest form of Tragedy, the Plot must be not simple but complex. ..."; Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Willis, and the Drama, 3.342.

²⁸Miss Alterton, *Origins of Poe's Critical Theory*, 73 (see note 5, above), quotes from the *Southern Literary Messenger* 1.698 the following words (of which she says, "it is impossible not to consider Poe as responsible for the insertion of this bit"): "Aristotle's name is supposed to be authority for the three unities. The only one of which he speaks decisively is the unity of action. With regard to the unity of time he merely throws out an indefinite hint. Of the unity of place not one word does he say". With this she compares the following passage from August Wilhelm Schlegel, *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, Translated by John Black, 237 (Second Edition, by A. J. W. Morrison, London, George Bell and Sons, 1906): "It is amusing enough to see Aristotle driven perforce to lend his name to those three unities, whereas the only one of which he speaks with any degree of fulness is the first, the unity of action. With respect to the unity of time, he merely throws out a vague hint; while of the unity of place he says not a syllable". See also S. H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, 289-301 (London, Macmillan, 1927).

²⁹Charles Dickens, 3.478.

³⁰Poetics 15.6... *κἀν γὰρ ἀνώμαλός τις... δεῖ εἶναι...* "... Fourthly, they must be consistent, true to their own nature throughout the play. Even if the original person whom the poet is representing (as Achilles) should happen to be inconsistent, and should be taken as an example of that type, still the representation should be consistently inconsistent. ..."; "... The fourth is to make them consistent and the same throughout; even if inconsistency be part of the man before one for imitation as presenting that form of character, he should still be consistently inconsistent. ..."; Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Willis, and the Drama, 3.347.

³¹Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Willis, and the Drama, 3.347.

require that the inconsistencies be not absolute antagonisms to the point of neutralization....

The same rule, both critics assert, holds good for the representation of the unnatural and the supernatural. Poe says³², "... All deviations, especially wide ones, from nature, should be justified to the author by some specific object...."

In one most interesting passage, Poe, thinking that he is flouting one of Aristotle's principles, is really upholding it. In Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*³³ Poe had read a statement by that famous critic to the effect that some accidentality contravenes "the essence of poetry, which Aristotle pronounces to be *σπουδαϊότατον καὶ φιλοσοφώτατον γένος*, the most intense, weighty, and philosophical product of human art; adding, as the reason, that it is the most catholic and abstract...." This passage he found referred to by Wordsworth also, who in all probability had his information concerning it from Coleridge³⁴. In three passages Poe, supposing Aristotle to have said what he found in a misquotation of Aristotle by Coleridge, takes issue with him. In one place he says³⁵:

... Aristotle, with singular assurance, has declared poetry the most philosophical of all writing (*σπουδαϊότατον καὶ φιλοσοφώτατον <sic> γένος*), defending it principally on that score. He seems to think—and many following him have thought—that the end of all literature should be instruction—a favorite dogma of the school of Wordsworth. But it is a truism that the end of our existence is happiness. If so, the end of every separate aim of our existence—of everything connected with our existence—should be still happiness. Therefore, the end of instruction should be happiness—and happiness, what is it but the extent or duration of pleasure? ... in fact, *ceteris paribus*, he who pleases is of more importance to his fellow than he who instructs....

Aristotle, in point of fact, says only that poetry is something more philosophic and serious than history, because poetry tends to give general truths, whereas history gives particular facts³⁶. Aristotle believes, as Poe believed later, that the end of poetry is pleasure³⁷. Poe, in condemning his admired Coleridge for assuming that instruction is the end of poetry, is, without realizing it, nearer than Coleridge to the actual statement of Aristotle.

Enough has been said to prove the deep impression which Aristotle's critical principles exerted upon Poe's critical theory. The evidence makes it quite clear that

³²Robert M. Bird, 3.269. Compare Poetics 15.10-10d, 24.15-22.

³³Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 468-469 (see William Greenough Thayer Shedd's edition of Coleridge's *Prose Works*, 3.468-469 [New York, Harper and Brothers, 1871, 7 volumes]).

³⁴Professor Herrick, *The Poetics of Aristotle in England*, 145 (see note 1, above), mentions this discrepancy between Aristotle and Coleridge; I had noted it before I found his discussion of the matter.

³⁵Henry Cockton, 3.461. Other passages worded almost identically with this are Elizabeth Barrett Barrett, 3.411, and Letter to B., 4.392. Mr. Norman Foerster, *American Literature*, 18-19 (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1928), is hardly correct in saying that Poe derived this mistaken idea from Wordsworth. Wordsworth, who makes the same mistake in thought, does not quote Aristotle at all; he derived the idea from Coleridge.

³⁶Poetics 9.3... *διὸ καὶ φιλοσοφώτερόν... καθ' ἑκάστον λέγει*, "... Poetry, therefore, is something more philosophic and of a higher seriousness than History; for Poetry tends rather to express what is universal, whereas History relates particular events as such. ..."; "... Hence poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars. ..."

³⁷See note 22, above.

Poe's knowledge of the Poetics came to him at second hand through various channels. It has been shown that Poe is sometimes general where Aristotle is specific, and that Poe sometimes accepts as genuine another critic's false rendering of Aristotle. One may also adduce as testimony what Poe does not say. The *argumentum ex silentio* is a dangerous weapon; yet, had Poe known the Poetics at first hand, he would hardly have failed to use so much that was available there either to bolster up his own theories or to demolish his enemies. Nevertheless, fragmentary and distorted as was his knowledge of the Poetics, it had a strong shaping influence upon his criticism.

(To be continued)

WASHINGTON AND
JEFFERSON COLLEGE

JOHN PAUL PRITCHARD

THREE PHASES OF CLASSICAL TYPE CHARACTERIZATION¹

Characterization in the classical writers, it is commonly held, differed from that in modern authors in the fact that in the classical authors each personage was regarded as the representative of a type rather than as a distinct individual. As a result of this difference modern taste has drawn comparisons unfavorable to what it regards as the inferior artistry of ancient portrayal of character. It is unquestionably true that, though no classical author of note portrays his personages as the mere personifications of a type, the tendency to precisely that sort of character drawing was expressed in practice and voiced in the utterances of classical rhetorical theory². But it may well be questioned whether in practice the narrative writers portrayed merely one type of old man, for example, or several phases thereof, merely one type of young man, or several phases thereof, and so on.

The meaning of a *type* in character was rather fully discussed by Mr. Bliss Perry in the following passage³:

... The dictionaries suggest two lines of definition <of the word 'type'>, both of which are of use to the student of fiction. According to the first, type means an *ideal representation* of a species or group, combining its essential characteristics. It is this sense of the word which dictionary makers have in mind in describing the type as the ideal hovering before the artist. But in the terms of another definition, type also means an *example* of a species or group combining its essential characteristics. When, therefore, we speak of types in fiction we sometimes mean that a person is portrayed as embodying more or less perfectly certain ideals which exist in the mind of the artist, and we also mean very frequently that the typical person is simply an excellent example of a well known species or group.

Now, though type characterization in both these senses may be predicated of the classical authors (for

idealization is very frequent), it is in the second sense, that of a person as "an excellent example of a well known species or group", that the term 'type characterization' will be employed in the present paper.

It is needless to rehearse at length the prescriptions and the directions of ancient rhetorical theory for the careful preservation of the type in characterization. Aristotle, in the Poetics⁴, suggests the notion of the type in tragedy; and in the Rhetoric⁵ he sketches for his readers sundry specimen characters—the young man, the elderly man, the man in his prime, the well-born man, the wealthy man, and the man in power. Though it is true that, in the Rhetoric, Aristotle is speaking primarily to the orator and is insisting on that attention to *phoroi* which played so large a rôle in the technique of the successful public speaker, it is none the less noteworthy that this departmentalization of personalities was felt to be proper for narrative as well as for rhetorical art. That Horace is equally wedded to the preservation of the type appears in these verses⁶,

Intererit multum, divosne loquatur an heros,
maturusne senex an adhuc florente iuventa
fervidus, et matrona potens an sedula nutrix,
mercatorne vagus cultorve virentis agelli,
Colchus an Assyrius, Thebis nutritus an Argis,

and more fully in his account of the four ages of man—boyhood, youth, maturity, and old age⁷.

However, the most cursory examination of the practice of the narrative writers themselves makes it evident that, though they generally adhere to type characterization, the very general prescriptions of rhetorical theory are in application made more definitive, and that each narrative *genre* is likely to set up its own interpretation of the typical old man, man of mature years, youth, old woman, matron, and young girl. This differentiation is particularly noticeable in the three *genres* of comedy, tragedy, and epic.

The *senes* of Hellenistic comedy are closest in their approximation to the pattern of old man drawn by Aristotle⁸ and by Horace⁹. As a class those *senes* tend to an extremity of caution and calculation; they incline to be selfish and to be basically swayed by love of gain; they are querulous, ill-tempered, and given to caustic oburgation of their erring sons. But it is a point of the definitive influence of comedy as a *genre* that makes comic old men gullible, subject to deception by crafty slaves, and mortally fearful of their often shrewish wives.

The elders of tragedy may manifest many of the characteristics of the genus *senex*, but they are marked in addition by the searing brand of unkindly fate. Their 'tragic' aspect is behind Horace's admonition¹⁰,
... si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi: tunc tua me infortunia laedent, Telephe vel Peleu.... But theirs are often a lofty resignation to the heaviness of their doom, such as the year-worn old exile manifests in the Oedipus Coloneus, and a kingly nobility and a lingering of the spirit and strength of youth, such as Peleus displays in the Andromacha.

¹1454a, 16-33. Cicero, De Officiis 1.122-124, suggests the character types of youths and old men, rulers and subjects, citizens and aliens. ²2.12-17. ³Ars Poetica 114-118. ⁴Ars Poetica 153-178.

⁵Rhetoric 2.15. ⁶Ars Poetica 169-178.

⁷Ars Poetica 102-104.

¹This paper was read (by title) at the meeting of the American Philological Association, held at Syracuse, New York, in December, 1932. A very brief abstract of the paper appeared in Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association 62.

²Theophrastus, in his 'Characters', and Menander, in his fragments, exemplify the tendency in practice to such type portrayal of character. Demetrius, 'On Style' 216, speaks of a messenger's announcement as made 'quite in character and with great vividness'. Quintilian speaks (6. 2.17) of *phoroi* in the portrayal of rustics, superstitious persons, misers, and cowards. Appropriateness or decorum in the portrayal of character is referred to with approval, e. g. by Euanthius, De Fabula 3. 4, and by Donatus, in his notes on Terence, Andria 447, Eunuchus 507.

³See below, 88 A, at the top. C.K.>.

Finally, the old men of epic are patriarchal in character. Especially is this true of the Aeneid, in which the elders of Trojans and Italians alike appear to be illumined with the fine glow of Cicero's *De Senectute*. Their eventful lives have experienced at once the caress and the blow of fortune's hand, but disappointment has not embittered them, nor have they become calculating or meanly expedient, as the *senes* of comedy have become. Rather, life's buffetings have taught them wisdom, and they are ready now to serve with counsel and guidance a community which formerly they defended with strength of arm and of steel. Epic deals in kindly fashion with their defects—their lengthiness of discourse, their proclivity for reminiscence, their glorification of the days of their own youth. Such are the Vergilian Ilioneus, Nautes, Latinus, Evander, and especially the idealized Anchises¹⁰.

Aristotle's type portrayal of the young man is quite general¹¹. Though his picture of old age leaves the impression of an unfriendly sketch, his treatment of youth is less determinate and less fixed. It is rather a survey of the various tendencies and biases that are likely to manifest themselves in the plastic period of early young manhood, before these become fixed habits or traits of character. Passionateness, excess, love of honor and victory, impulsiveness, self-assurance, high-mindedness, courage, sanguineness, generosity are among the inclinations of youth, good and bad, as Aristotle presents them¹². Now, in comedy certain of these qualities are, as it were, singled out as characteristic traits of the *adulescentes*. Alike in their amours and in their intrigues, the *adulescentes* display also a common impulsiveness that entangles them in inevitable complications. A disdain for the advice of their elders is a common trait; so, too, is a prevailing moral weakness, coupled with a chronic inability to escape unaided from a difficulty, so that they are perpetually dependent upon slaves and parasites. They are capable, it is true, of acts of generosity and kindness, but their moral fiber is generally yielding rather than tough.

The young men of tragedy—e. g. Orestes and Py-lades—are high-minded and courageous. Seriousness of demeanor and readiness to perform acts of self-sacrifice are with them the rule, not the exception. Epic youths, particularly again in Vergil, are stamped with a zest for honor and victory, loyalty and valor. Young men like Ascanius, Nisus, Euryalus, Lausus, and Pallas are alike in their sanguine hopefulness, their ambitiousness, their chivalry, and their fondness for adventure. Their deficiencies are seen especially in an eagerness to expose themselves to perils beyond their powers. Perhaps Vergil's well-known interest in the youthful Romans of his day and his desire to recreate through them something of the pristine vigor and valor of the early city led him to portray his youthful heroes as attractively as he did. Their robustness and high-mindedness of character seem to be in almost conscious contrast to the laxness of the comic *adules-*

centes. Of the manly and distinctively admirable qualities of his epic youths Vergil is surely mindful in his eulogistic apostrophe to Nisus and Euryalus¹³:

Fortunati ambo! Si quid mea carmina possunt,
nulla dies umquam memori vos eximet aevo,
dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum
accolet imperiumque pater Romanus habebit.

In these two types, the old men and the young, the three phases of comic, tragic, and epic characterization are noticeably apparent. It would be possible to suggest similar comparative studies of other type characters as differentiated by *genre* phase. For example, the freeborn young women of comedy are strikingly opposed to their counterparts in the youthful heroines of tragedy, such as the noble and the self-sacrificing Antigone and Polyxena and Iphigenia. Homeric and Vergilian epic allowed little prominence to unmarried young women, though of course the gracious figure of Nausicaa and the doom-marked personality of the warrior-maid Camilla¹⁴ are splendid exceptions in true epic mold.

Similarly, the matrons of comedy, shrewish often-times, domineering, and suspicious, are opposed to the wives of tragedy, who combine patience and endurance of accumulated woes with a constant mournfulness and grief of manner and mien. The wives of epic as a class are abidingly loyal and faithful to the loved ones, stoically inured to hardship and peril, but prone to a certain excitability and hysteria that may lead them to acts of violence; one has only to think of Vergil's Amata, wife of Latinus, to see the epic phase of the matron type well exemplified.

It need hardly be remarked that there are striking exceptions to the leveling process of the *genre* phases of type characterization, just as type characterization itself in the classical writers sometimes yields to an almost modern individualized and highly personalized portrayal. Nor is it needful to develop here the thought that much might be made of other *genre* phases of type characterization, such as the pastoral phase and the elegiac phase. The considerations here advanced will perhaps suffice to indicate that in comedy, tragedy, and epic at least the fixed type characters of rhetorical theory were subjected to modifications in accord with the *genre* in which they chanced to appear.

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ATHENIAN *ἐθούραι* AND THE SPANISH RESIDENCIA

Perhaps unique among legal institutions of the past and the present is the Athenian *ἐθούραι*¹. It con-

¹Aeneid 9. 446-449.

²In an article entitled Vergil's Tragedy of Maidenhood, THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 18.107-108, Professor Norman W. De Witt deals with the story of Camilla. C. K. >.

³Emil Boisacq, Dictionnaire Étymologique de la Langue Grecque², 294. (Heidelberg, Winter, Paris, Klincksieck, 1923), connects the noun with the verb *ἐθούρω*, but says that the etymology of both words is unknown. The fullest and most useful accounts of the *ἐθούραι* are to be found in G. Busolt, Griechische Staatskunde, 1^a, 472, 2^a, 1076, 1080 (Munich, C. H. Beck, 1920, 1926); J. H. Lipsius, Das Attische Recht und Rechtsverfahren, 1. 101-110, 2.286-298 (Leipzig, O.R. Reisland, 1905, 1908); G. Gilbert, The Constitutional Antiquities of Sparta and Athens, Translated by E. J. Brooks and T. Nicklin, 223-228 (London, Swan Sonnen-

¹⁰Compare H. W. Prescott, The Development of Virgil's Art, 463-481, for a detailed study of the characterization of the Aeneid (University of Chicago Press, 1928).

¹¹Rhetoric 2.13. ¹²Rhetoric 2.12. 5-11.

sisted of an audit of accounts to which every officer of the commonwealth, including the members of the *βουλή*, members of the Areopagus, priests, and priestesses, was subject. The *εἶθοναι* of generals in active service, however, constituted a special case. The time limit for the audit (not constant in all instances) was thirty days after the expiration of the term of office. The three important charges on which the officer might be tried were bribery, theft, and general mismanagement. A man under audit could not leave the city, or convert his property, even to religious purposes, or will it to anyone; he could not enter another family by adoption. Embezzlement and bribery were punishable by a fine of ten times the amount involved. No man could be brought to audit twice for the same offense. The initiative for the audit might be taken by any citizen. The audit took place, in Aristotle's day, under the supervision of a board of ten *εἴθονοι*, assisted by ten *λογισταί*, and ten *συνήγοροι*. Of course, it is almost needless to add that, through favoritism and political chicanery, some escaped the consequences of the audit.

A hitherto unnoticed parallel in legal institutions of later times is that presented by the Spanish Colonial *Residencia*². This procedure is in several respects more closely analogous to the *εἶθοναι* than any other system of official audit known to me, although behind the *εἶθοναι* lay the ultimate authority of the Athenian people, whereas the *Residencia* rendered Spanish Colonial officers finally responsible to the Spanish king, by way of the highest court of appeal, the Council of the Indies. One student of Latin American history thus succinctly describes the process of the *Residencia*³:

An important check upon the actions of crown officials in the Spanish Indies was furnished by the *residencia*, which was an inquiry ordinarily made at the end of their term. This inquest was a process designed to hold an official accountable for his actions during a certain period. It was an examination into his official career, an audit of his accounts, and a formal trial. The time allowed for such an investigation was ordinarily about four months. Notices of the *residencia* were published in the district of the official under examination, and aggrieved persons were invited to enter complaints against him within sixty days. Then the commissioner or judge of the *residencia*—who was selected by the authority that had appointed the particular official—opened a court in the town where the official had resided. A law of 1582 provided that the formal trial might last for sixty days in case of presidents, *oidores*, *alcaldes*, attorneys, governors, *corregidores*, and *alcaldes mayores*. After considering the charges, examining witnesses, weighing evidence, and hearing an accused official, the commissioner of *residencia* could render judgment. In important cases

schein, New York, Macmillan, 1895). The obscurity of his style and the fact that certain of his conclusions are opposed by experts make the discussion by Wilamowitz, *Aristoteles und Athen*, 2.231-251 (Berlin, Weidmann, 1893) less useful than the discussions of the authorities mentioned above. The chief original sources of information are the inscriptions, the Attic orators, and Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens*.

²From this comes the transitive verb *residencia*.

³W. S. Robertson, *History of the Latin American Nations*, 100-101 (New York, Appleton, 1926). Of the three chief law codes under which the Spanish Indies were governed, *Las Siete Partidas*, *Las Leyes de Toro*, and *La Nueva Recopilación*, the last named, promulgated in 1680, may be found most readily in *Recopilación de Leyes de las Indias*, *Mandadas Imprimir Y publicar por la Magestad Católica del Rey Don Carlos II Nuestro Señor* (Quinta Edición, Madrid, 1841). It contains forty-nine laws concerning the *residencia*, from 1548 to 1667 (see Volume II, Libro V, Título 15, pages 207-216).

appeal might be taken to the respective *audiencia* and thence to the Council of the Indies. Apparently this inquest was also applied to minor officials whenever their superiors were investigated. Although in theory the *residencia* seemed like an admirable mode of accountability, yet, largely because of favoritism, its results were sometimes questionable. A Peruvian viceroy indeed compared the *residencia* to a whirlwind that raised dust and chaff.

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THE EAST AND WEST IN ARISTOTLE, METEOROLOGICA 364a

A difficulty is presented by the accepted interpretation of Aristotle, *Meteorologica* 364a, 24-27, because that interpretation offers a very lame argument as to why the east winds are warmer than the west winds.

The text¹ of the passage is as follows:

θερμότερα δὲ τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς ἑω τῶν ἀπὸ δυσμῆς, ὅτι πλείω χρόνον ὑπὸ τὸν ἥλιον ἐστί τὰ ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς· τὰ δ' ἀπὸ δυσμῆς ἀπολείπει τε θάπτον καὶ πλησιάζει τῷ τόπῳ ὁριαιτέρον.

Mr. Webster² has translated the passage thus:

... East winds are warmer than west winds because the sun shines on the east longer, whereas it leaves the west sooner and reaches it later.

This interpretation can be retained only on the assumption that the sun's motion is one of variable speed, the rate being greater in the West than in the East. This is out of the question. Some more plausible explanation must be advanced if the sentence is not to be considered of doubtful authenticity. The language of the note on the passage by the ancient commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias³ is too equivocal to help us; if anything, it would strengthen the interpretation given above.

It seems to me advisable to regard τὰ throughout as referring to the winds⁴. In that case the sentence is to be translated thus⁵:

'... East winds are warmer than west winds because the sun shines on the east winds longer, whereas it reaches the West⁶ later and leaves the west winds sooner....'

In that case the explanation is that the sun, advancing in the same direction as the east winds and in the direction opposite to that taken by the west winds, is near⁶ the east winds for a longer time and warms them more.

VICTOR COUTANT

¹I give the text presented by Professor F. H. Fobes, *Aristotelis Meteorologicorum Libri Quattuor* (Harvard University Press, 1919).

²See E. W. Webster, translation of *Aristotelis Meteorologica*, to be found in Volume 3 of *The Works of Aristotle*, Translated into English Under the Editorship of W. D. Ross (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1923). <The pages of this volume are not numbered! C. K.>

³In *Meteorologica*, edited by M. Hayduck, page 111, 2-25 (Berlin, G. Reimer, 1899).

⁴Webster supposes that τὰ, except in line 24, refers to some word meaning 'region'; the expression τὰ ἀπὸ δυσμῆς, in lines 25, 26, for example, he translates by 'the west'.

⁵I understand τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς ἑω and τὰ ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς to mean the same thing.

⁶τῷ τόπῳ patently refers to the West, the 'place' of origin of the west winds. I cannot equate the words with τὰ ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς.

⁷I mean 'near' in the sense that the sun's angle of inclination from the vertical is virtually zero.

A REGRETTABLE ERROR

By an error in copying, for which I am myself responsible, the reference required for note 2a to Professor Korfmacher's article (page 85, above) is missing. I can not supply it at my present place of writing (Lexington, Kentucky). I will give it in Number 13, which will bear the date January 22, 1933.

CHARLES KNAPP

CHARCOAL¹

In The New York Sun of December 15, 1933, an article appeared under the title Charcoal Makers are Keeping Busy. The Subtitle read Their Kilns May be Found by Observant Motorists Not far from the city.

The article ran as follows:

"Whence comes the fuel that roasts the chestnuts yon vender offers at 10 cents a bag, while he warms his hands over its cheerful embers? Ask him and he will tell you he buys it by the sack 'some place on Second avenue.' What is it? Charcoal. How is it made and where does it come from? He doesn't know.

Neither does one New Yorker out of a hundred realize that within the memory of the older generation the charcoal industry was one which had to be reckoned with by fuel dealers. But even that one per cent knows nothing of the romance that attaches to the charcoal industry or the history of its use as a fuel. Only in some of the more remote rural sections are there living today any of those descendants of the pioneers whose livelihood depended in even a remote degree on the business of turning out the fuel supplies which were once considered so necessary to the comfort and happiness of thousands.

Not long ago an economist writing for a magazine on the changed economic situation in New England embellished his article with an illustration bearing the caption, 'When the Charcoal Makers Thrived.' He seemed to be proceeding on the theory that the charcoal maker is no more. Yet each day the New Yorker sees the evidence of his activity on street corners and in numerous other places.

Less than three hours' drive from New York, the observant motorist may behold the evidence of an industry that always has thrived under the sod, strange as that may seem. For charcoal is essentially an underground product. By following certain by-roads in Connecticut, Massachusetts or in fact any of the New England States, there will occasionally come into view near the edge of the woods groups of mounds which tell

¹I find myself at Lexington, Kentucky, far from my own books, and at a time when libraries here are closed (December 24, 1933), with this page to fill. I have long believed that the Romans made extensive use of charcoal. I have no way here of verifying this belief. The quotation given here from a New York newspaper has value for the student of Roman life.

their own story. They are charcoal kilns. Perhaps the mounds will be hidden behind a haze of smoke and to the nostrils will come odors of burning wood, but there will be no flame nor other evidence of fire.

Closer observation reveals a structure shaped something like a beehive with doors at opposite sides and three rows of small openings around the bottom. These kilns are made of brick but another fifty-mile drive may uncover another of a different sort—built into the ground so to speak. But the elderly custodian of the modern furnace whose weather-beaten face testifies to long service as a son of the soil, will tell you that the underground kilns are not as efficient as the 'modern' kind which, in his case, dates back nearly fifty years.

For many months past, choppers have been busy in the forest, and the result of their work is at hand in the great piles of wood cut in four or five-foot lengths which are ready to be piled into the kiln soon as the present 'batch' is ready to be sacked and taken to market. Almost any kind of wood will do. Some charcoal makers say that a mixture of soft and hard woods makes the best fuel, while others say that the quality makes no difference.

At North Adams, Mass., Ethan Howard has a kiln in which only white pine is used. He says the product will bring more money. It lasts longer and makes a hotter fire. The Howard family history is interesting. It has to do with 'only sons' each of whom has been brought up in the charcoal industry.

If you are fortunate enough to have time at your disposal you will be interested in watching the process of 'baking' wood which is the term used by some of the pioneers to apply to the manufacture of charcoal. Inside the kiln, the wood is piled up just about as it was laid on the old-fashioned woodpile, and then ignited. The doors are all closed if the kiln is of brick. If not, vents are left in the earthen covering that is piled over the whole mass. Through these, the smoke escapes. If the wood is soft, it is left to smoulder for three days or so. If hard, sometimes seven days are required to burn the wood to the proper degree. According to Mr. Howard, it is the 'feel' of the smoke, whether moist or wet, or the blue color it assumes, that tells whether the time has come to close the openings and permit the fire to smoulder. When the vents are shut off, ten days or two weeks must be allowed for the fire to go out and the finished product is ready for the market.

But today, the corner chestnut vender has need for it. Of course, his demand alone could not keep the kilns busy. The chemical industry is probably the charcoal maker's best customer, but tobacco growers find no substitute for it in the matter of drying their crops. There is always a demand for it and for the last two or three years, according to the charcoal makers, the demand has been unusually heavy. So here is an industry that seems to have belonged to the past, so far as the general public's memory is concerned, which is still thriving".

CHARLES KNAPP